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RETURN TO MAIN FILE

STATEMENTS OF IRAQI COMMUNIST LEADERS

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STATEMENTS OF IRAQI COMMUNIST LEADERS

1. Open Letter to His Excellency the Leader Abdul Karim Kassem

[Following is a translation of an article by the editorial staff of the Arabic-language newspaper Ittihad ash-Sha'b, Baghdad, 3 June 1960, page 1.]

Your excellency has on several occasions in the past declared your support of the freedom of the press and your wish to preserve this freedom. You reasserted the same view when in your last press conference you said that no newspaper shall be placed under control because of what it may publish or the view it may express and that the people should be the judges as to what each paper chooses to publish and what the Government stands for.

Evidently, one is led to assume that the views in Baghdad, it being one country, should apply with equal force outside Baghdad. This freedom of the press should apply throughout the country and implemented by all organs of the government. But things have happened lately and continue to happen in a manner which is inconsistent with these declarations and assertions as well as with the spirit of the law. Our paper, Ittihad ash-Sha'b, upon which a favorable judgement has been passed by the people, is nevertheless being subjected to certain incomprehensible and rather dangerous measures. Such measures have never in the past been applied to any duly authorized paper. They are strange because they have no foundation either in law or in precedent; nor do they have any foundation even in an arbitrary interpretation of laws. Not even the Press Law of 1954 which was shelved by the Revolution would justify such measures.

This is the second day during which Ittihad-ash-Sha'b is banned from seven Liwas which are under the First Division. We never been informed that the ban was imposed because we published an editorial supporting the efforts of the Government in combating illiteracy in the May 27 issue of the paper. The ban, which is viewed by these authorities as though it were legal, would not be lifted until after July 14.

This arbitrary measure was not limited to simply banning the paper but also carried the threat of punishment to the distributors, the bookshops and even the readers of the paper.

The dangers implied in such a measure are, in addition to the foregoing considerations, its inconsistency with any sound principle of national unity or centralized government.

We are also compelled to say that such measures weaken the authority of the national government, damage the prestige of the Republic and are a challenge to the rule of law.

In view of the foregoing, we petition that such measures be abandoned. We are confident that public opinion and all national circles eager to uphold the supremacy of the law join us in this just cause. We are also confident that your Excellency will give it great consideration.

With great regard to your Excellency,

The Editorial Staff.

2. Feudalism Will be Successfully Uprooted Through Further Distribution of Lands to the Peasants.

(Following in a translation of an article by Da'ud Sa'igh in a Arabic-language newspaper al-Mabda', Baghdad, 28 May 1960, pages 1 and 4.)

Prior to the July 14 Revolution our beloved Iraq was in a state of semi-independence and semi-feudalism. The feudalists monopolized the best lands of Iraq which they owned in large holdings and by virtue of which and by virtue of their class interests, they enjoyed three forms of influence. They exercised economic influence of the peasants who were exploited in the worst possible manner thanks to the protection of the feudalists by the imperialists. The latter found in the feudalists a tool which they could manipulate to retard the development of the country and prevent its independence. By allying themselves with the imperialists they also exercised political influence and thus the fate of the feudalists was linked to the continued exploitation of our wealth, our natural resources and our great people by the imperialists. The political life of our country, both internally and externally, was under the control of the imperialists who, using force to establish the monarchical regime, used the monarchy to attain their own objectives. They rigged the elections in order to create an air of legitimacy around their conspiracies against our national movement, our national liberation, and our national sovereignty. They suppressed the bitter struggle of the national-

ist forces, led by the Iraqi Communist Party, whose aim was to expose these plots. They packed our parliament with people who agreed to sell themselves to imperialism and to rubber stamp its actions.

The political influence of the feudalists was not of course limited to their occupation of seats in rigged parliaments, but it extended to the control of the machinery of government for the attainment of their reactionary, unjust and narrow class interests which were incompatible with the general welfare but consistent with the interests of the imperialists. They carried the exploitation of the peasants to the point of expropriating them economically and denying them the most basic political rights. We the Communists were not exaggerating when we maintained that the revolution against the feudalists was in essence a democratic revolution, because it ensured to the peasants, who are the majority of the people, their democratic rights. We were not mistaken when we maintained that national liberation and the solution of the national problem demand a solution of the agrarian problem. The feudalists were closely tied to the administrative set-up of the old regime and especially to the police. The oppressed and exploited peasants were driven to the prisons at the will of the feudalists, and the public servants, irrespective of their ranks, were all subject to arbitrary dismissal if they incurred the displeasure of a feudalist who had only to intimate his feelings to those in charge of the monarchical regime.

From the combination of the economic and political power of the feudalists sprang their social power which enabled them to consolidate their reactionary power and to carry to excess their oppression of the peasants, taking advantage of tribal jealousies to which individual peasants were susceptible. But with the success of the Glorious July 14 Revolution, the end of feudalism as an oppressive economic order and of the feudalists as an exploiting class were in sight. The Agrarian Reform Law in fact brought an end to the exploitation of the peasants and registered the liberation of the peasants from serfdom and feudalism after they were liberated along with all other citizens from the yoke of imperialism.

The feudalists were naturally shocked at the victory of the national liberation movement. They yielded to this victory but did not submit to it, just as the imperialists have reacted to the Revolution. By redistributing land into small tenancies among the mass of peasants in accordance with the Agrarian Reform Law, the feudalists realized that any hope they might have entertained to regain their class status has been dissipated, but they haven't given up any such hopes.

It was natural under the circumstances that they would turn to the internal and external enemies of the Republic seeking their assistance in plotting against our Republic. This explains why Ahmad Ajeil and other chiefs of the Shammar tribes gave aid to the traitor ash-Shwwaf during the Mosul uprising and that the remnants of the imperialist in the various parts of Iraq have shown some signs of activity lately. But the speedy suppression of the Shwwaf mutiny, thanks to the plan of our democratic leader, Abdul Karim Kassem, and to the support given to the authorities in Mosul and outside by all the nationalist forces, it was possible to destroy the influence of the feudalists for a second time. But the feudalists were awaiting for the right opportunity to rise again in an attack against our freedom and our democratic Republic. This was expected since a degenerate class cannot exist without the support of the imperialists who are the greatest obstacle to the progress of the underdeveloped countries. The feudalists showed readiness to ally themselves with any force which was hostile to the Republic and its democratic program. They finally hit on a grim weapon: combatting Communist and preventing the Iraqi Communist Party from obtaining a license. In this endeavor they were successful in gaining the sympathy of some officials who were made use of to oppress the peasants under different pretexes. This was like a ray of hope for these classes to regain their influence and power, but any hope they might have entertained was again dissipated by the determination of our Government to proceed speedily with the Agrarian Reform Law, and during the past few weeks large areas of land have been redistributed. The Government will continue in these efforts until feudalism is uprooted and the officials who lent it support are punished.

We are not denying that a group of feudalists may have adjusted itself to the new conditions and thus penetrated the ranks of the people, but the bigger group of feudalists has so far refused to adjust to the new order or to submit to the democratic Republic. This group will continue to lend support to the enemies of our Republic and to plot against our national liberation and our national sovereignty.

We are fully confident that the skill of our Revolutionary Government and its democratic leader Abdul Karim Kassem will prepare us in a manner to uphold the supremacy of the law vis-a-vis the feudalists who have refused but to desert the national ranks.

3. In Addition to the Right of Party Organization, the Sons of the Iraqi Labor Class Have the Much Greater Right of Labor Organization.

(Following is a translation of an article by Da'ud Sa'igh in the Arabic-language newspaper al-Mabda', Baghdad, 29 May 1960, pages 1 and 4.)

The Iraqi labor class, just as all other similar classes, has some political objectives of which some are immediate, others long-range; some are tactical, others strategic. These objectives are to be attained under the leadership and guidance of the political party of the workers throughout Iraq, the Iraqi Communist Party. These objectives are defined by the stage of historical development through which our beloved Iraq is passing; it is the stage of national liberation and economic, cultural and social development towards a free socialist order.

The Iraqi working classes, like all other working classes, has some immediate economic demands which it seeks to attain through its union struggle under the guidance of the General Federation of the Unions of Iraqi Labor. These narrow and immediate objectives are defined and conditioned by the success or failure of the Iraqi Labor in the political field.

In any country, the labor movement may attain its union rights without gaining its political rights. This was the situation in Iraq under the old monarchical regime. But the opposite can never hold, for a labor movement can never be given full political rights without its gaining its union rights as well.

The Societies' Law No 1 of 1960 was one of the gains achieved by the July 14 Revolution, whereby our labor class was only granted the right to organize itself politically. This has opened the way for our struggling party, The Iraqi Communist Party, to intensify its struggle, a move which has caused great fear among the enemies of the Republic both inside Iraq and outside and among the opportunists who have infiltrated the democratic movement and the ranks of the communists.

One of the first results to be expected of this new political freedom attained by the working class in Iraq should have been the intensification of the struggle for union rights and the spreading of its ideas among the masses. But developments have taken a somewhat different course than this. This leaves a big question mark to be answered.

One of the main reasons for this unexpected development is that a faction of the working classes deserted the Iraqi Communist Party in order to join some other party while a large number of workers were reluctant to join any party, including their own. We have tried in vain to attract the latter group of workers into our Party, or to organize a united list of candidates to oppose those who have deserted the workers' ranks to join another party. The answer which this group has given us was that it was easier for them to allow the other faction to gain control of their unions than to join with us in a united campaign. This answer is inspired by certain groups whose stand on this and other issues is undisguised and whose hostility to the licensing of our Party was made well known.

As if this was not all, but the enemies of the labor movement and of the democratic program of our Republic, have tried to exploit this division among the rank of the labor movement by persisting in their destructive efforts. They find in this situation a golden opportunity to set one labor group against another. This has led to some workers losing their jobs.

But now that the democratic leader Abdul Karim Kassem has ordered that all workers who lost their jobs in the oil industry shall be reemployed, we are fully confident that he will extend his order to include all workers who were arbitrarily deprived of their jobs in the government and semi-official establishments and that he will order all those detained to be released working by the motto: bygonas are forever bygonas.

The above democratic orders may solve some of the immediate problems of our fellow workers. The underlying problems cannot be solved except through the revolutionary and union labor movements which can defeat any force which is opposed to its objectives even if this force is disguised under the name of a workers party.

4. The Maintenance and Consolidation of Party Life is a Deeply Sincere Policy of our Democratic Government.

(Following is a translation of an article by Da'ud Sa'igh in the Arabic-language newspaper al-Mabda', Baghdad, 31 May 1960.)

The promulgation of the Societies' Law No. 1 of 1960 and its implementation was not all that our Revolution Government has achieved in this field. The Law stipulated that no political party may be licensed unless it is built on the principle of accepting and preserving the democratic system of the Republic and on

preserving a true Iraqi unity. Each party must follow a policy leading to the consolidation of the gains made possible by the Revolution and the development of the principles of the Revolution.

Our Revolution Government has already authorized a number of political parties, among which was our own Iraqi Communist Party concerning which two separate applications were made to the authorities. The other application was denied. We are discussing here this issue or the reasons which made the authorities accept our application. This has become a matter for the history of the Republic of Iraq and of our progressive party.

The Government has expressed its policies well, when the leader Abdul Karim Kassem stated in his press conference which he held on Friday May 27, 1960, "I hope and I have no doubt that the political parties in Iraq will be strongly established and will enjoy full freedom. I am confident that all parties will put the general welfare above private interests. As for the Government, we cannot but support the need for political parties in a country which is seeking a true democratic program".

This important democratic statement is not aimed at the democratic parties in Iraq, or their leaders, units and supporters; it is intended to serve a warning to all those who are hostile to the principle of the existence of a multi-party system in our beloved country which cannot but follow a true democratic program. It matters little whether the opponents of free political parties are responsible officials, journalists, or men of religion. The course is a necessity of a progressive and glorious Revolution.

If some have led themselves to believe that the new law prevented them from opposing any political party except our Iraqi Communist Party, they are misled by the enemies of the Republic outside Iraq. The enemies outside are the imperialists who in the nature of their class interests and their desire to subjugate people everywhere are opposed to true democracy. To them any party which is the vanguard of democratic parties and which by virtue of its scientific socialism and by virtue of its strong organization which brings out the creative and constructive capabilities of its members, and by virtue of its position of leadership in the struggle against imperialism everywhere is an enemy. Our Democratic Party is one of these parties.

There is no doubt that an Iraqi who finds himself in agreement with the imperialists if even on one single issue cannot help but be used as a tool for the destruction of our progressive

Republic. It makes little difference whether he is paid for his services or not.

We have always maintained, and events have proved, that the Communists are not hostile to national liberation; they are, on the contrary, the best champions of national self expression. They are not only opposed to the oppression of nationalities, they work actively to recreate national tradition and heritage, work for the advancement of the backward nations, and strive to uplift the less advanced national groups to the position attained by the more progressive groups.

We have repeatedly stated and our record proves that the struggle of the Iraqi Communist Party is a political struggle and that our main objective under the banner of the progressive Republic of Iraq is to strengthen this Republic as a stronghold of democracy, peace and liberation. Our struggle is unrelated to religious beliefs as is made clear in Article 3 of our By-laws which stipulates that: Party membership is open to every working Iraqi citizen who meets the conditions of membership as defined by the Party Committees, irrespective of his national or religious beliefs.

We respect religious beliefs and we work for the freedom of religious expression. We demand separation of religion and the state. Any Iraqi who resorts to religion as a tool to over-ride the democratic program of the Republic is in fact using religion to divide the people and pave the way for the plots of the imperialists against our democratic Republic. We the Iraqi communists shall work diligently to expose such people and urge the authorities to punish them as traitors. It matters least whether the person guilty of such offense is a man of religion or an ordinary citizen.

Any one who speaks the language of the traitor Nuri-al-Sa'id cannot be loyal to the July 14 Revolution or to the revolutionary gains of the people. We the communists have been accused of hostility to nationalism and religion. But it seems to us that we have heard these accusations before, from the criminal Nuri al-Said and from his agents who also threatened us with execution. But with the help of our faith in Marxism-Leninism we remained firm, overriding these dirty accusations until its originator was stamped over by the victorious July 14 Revolution.

We would like to recall in this respect, not in order to expose anyone, but to emphasize the importance of the threat of our leader to all those opposed to democratic freedom, that one of our party members in one of the Liwas was asked by a respon-

sible official to resign his party membership, and that the member rebuked him by telling him how proud he was to be a communist and a committee member in one of the Liwas.

We hope that all those who refuse to associate with the people will change their ways and all agents for the imperialists will be suppressed. It is left to the former to mend their ways, but the national authorities should attend to the latter group; our party can only remind the responsible officials in the hope that the unity of the National front is preserved.

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